



## **Milwaukee County Board of Supervisors**

*Supervisor Peggy A. West, 1st Vice-Chair, 12th District*

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: April 25, 2017

Contact: Brian Rothgery

414-278-4230 or [brian.rothgery@milwaukeecountywi.gov](mailto:brian.rothgery@milwaukeecountywi.gov)

### **Hold Clarke Accountable for Deaths in his Jail**

MILWAUKEE – During an inquest into the death of an inmate in the Milwaukee County Jail that occurred almost a year ago, prosecutors on Monday alleged what witnesses had previously told the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel: Sheriff's Clarke's guards at the jail intentionally turned off the water to an inmate's cell, resulting in the dehydration death of that inmate after seven days.

Supervisor Peggy A. West released the following statement in response to news of the inquest:

"We now know that prosecutors believe Sheriff Clarke's guards intentionally shut off the water to a man's jail cell and then allowed that man to die a slow and painful death from dehydration.

"There is clearly something wrong when guards decide that it's okay to deliberately shut off the water to someone's cell and then allow that person to die from thirst. The perpetrators of this heinous crime seem to have believed they could get away with it, and that is troubling.

"What we learned today is not new. Local media reported many months ago that guards deliberately shut off an inmate's water supply and let that man die, but we've heard nothing from Sheriff Clarke. For all we know, these guards are still working in Clarke's jail.

"It should not take something as extraordinary as an inquest for the Sheriff discipline his staff if their actions led to any preventable deaths. Most troubling is that Clarke's lack of action and failure to condemn the behavior of his guards seems to indicate that he feels they did nothing wrong.

"We see this over and over. When Sheriff Clarke screws up and puts the county at risk of having to pay out millions of dollars to settle claims for his failures, he attempts to divert attention away from his own actions.

"Enough is enough. Clarke oversees the jail and he needs to take responsibility for what happens there. Prosecutors should look at who authorized or encouraged guards to operate the county jail like a medieval dungeon, and follow the evidence wherever it leads, even if it leads directly to Sheriff Clarke."

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